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The Commonweal

March 11, 1949

Kicking Against the Goad

Evelyn Waugh

German Writers Today

Max Fischer

A Walk After Dark

W. H. Auden

VOLUME XLIX 15c NUMBER 22

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What Is Existentialism?

A good example of a forthcoming Commonweal feature article is "The Problem of Human Existence," by Kurt F. Reinhardt of Stanford University, author of a soon-to-be-published book on Existentialism. His article tackles a significant, much discussed topic with forthrightness and authority; it clarifies a rather stiff subject without watering things down.

Here is a bit of his introductory comment: "History offers ample evidence that, as long as human life and culture are healthy and normally integrated, the individual and universal elements balance each other. In times of severe stress and strain, however, when the foundations of human life and of the established system of values have been shaken, when man experiences more acutely the insecurity of life, one or the other of these elements tends to assert itself disproportionately and often pathologically. In existentialism, then, the weight or burden of life lies heavily on the individual and on the contingent and finite aspects . . . "

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The
COMMONWEAL

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Associate Editors:
John C. Cort, Anne Fremantle, Gregory Smith
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Advertising Manager
John Brubaker

Housing Always Emergency

ONE OF THE important bills held up by the miseries of the Eighty-first Congress is the Senate Bipartisan Housing Bill. This expanded version of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner Bill would provide 810,000 dwelling units by 1955 for families receiving less than $2,000 a year income. This housing is an emergency need despite the fact that across the country from California to New York real estate operators are finding themselves this winter, for the first time since before the war, with unsold houses on their hands.

That market is not the housing emergency in its stubborn and difficult form. It's impossible for families taking in less than $2,000 a year to have decent housing through the going economic system. Homes simply can't be built by our industrial system at a cost these families can meet on either a purchase or rental basis. The immediate, obvious, emergency problem is financial, and the Senate bill is largely a financial bill, providing contributions and federal financing: a system of housing subsidies to help the families, the states and the cities.

The American Federation of Labor also points out that "there are about 37 percent of American families who are in the so-called middle-income groups [between $2,000 and $4,000]. . . . They cannot afford to buy $10,000 houses or rent $80-a-month apartments." The AFL wants to utilize government lending powers to cheapen houses for these people. "These terms should be made available to public agencies (such as local public housing authorities), cooperatives, non-profit and limited-dividend corporations, and private builders who can conform to the rent schedules." This demand of the AFL expands the view of the housing problem, but it still keeps it almost exclusively financial, and still works strictly within the prevailing economic industrial system.

Walter Reuther, as usual, proposes a more startling innovation in methods. He wants warplane factories to turn out 20,000,000 prefabricated houses in the next decade, the Government financing the effort if private business will not carry it out. In Cleveland, a still more radical effort is being made by lumber dealers, who are encouraging and helping people to build their own homes. They sell "precut lumber to ambitious amateur builders—and throw in free expert advice on the side. Such a build-yourself system has been developed in Scandinavia over years, where they say housing conditions are good. It is, of course, in the direction of distributism and away from centralized capitalism, and a far more than simply financial affair. Innovation in this direction requires a kind of resolve and morale, and reaches further than to the immediate emergency.

But treating housing always as an emergency, and, with that excuse, attacking it by the line of least resistance, accumulates new problems almost as it passes, or bypasses, old ones. There are all the general planning and traffic snarls which will continue to injure most of our communities. An article by Charles Abrams, in *Commentary,* accuses the Federal Housing Administration of being a serious offender against racial and social segregation—"one of the large contributing factors to a 'ghetto system' being created in public and large privately-owned housing projects." And his own cure sounds rather nerve-wracking: "some attempt at 'tenant selection.'"

The release covering his article says: "Mr. Abrams concludes by saying that unless we can preserve the variety of races, cultures, income groups and other types that are the valued assets of cities, "the democratic chaos of unplanned cities may be preferable to the undemocratic order of stratified communities. . . . With a proper grasp of the facts and with imagination . . . we may be able to achieve both livable communities and the democratic way of life."

Housing is an emergency which we must not treat only as an emergency.

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The "Guilt" of the Protestants

"ONLY IN ONE respect does National Socialism resemble Christianity: we demand the whole allegiance of man, both of body and soul." So the Nazi Freisler shouted in the 1945 trial of Helmuth von Moltke. So today Communism announces, as squarely, in Hungary, in Bulgaria, in Rumania, in Poland. So it will announce tomorrow in San Marino, and, quite possibly, the day after, elsewhere.

Religion has always seemed dynamite to the rulers of any absolute state; and, suspect, has always had to choose whether to fight or flee. Nero and Caligula, like the Emperors Henry IV and Frederick II, asked what Freisler did, but it was not until after the Reformation that they got it. *Cujus rex, ejus religio* became the device of divided Europe, and the identification of German Evangelism with German Nationalism is still typified by such men as Pastor Niemoeller. But Communism writes no Concordat, except with its own national Church, the Russian Orthodox Church. The attack on Cardinal Mindszenty has been followed by allegations, which have been bolstered by the confessions of the accused, against fifteen Protestant ministers. Four of the indicted clergymen, the heads of the Baptist, Congregationalist, Methodist and Pentecost churches, together with eight lesser ministers, have testified to their own destruction. Minutely detailed acts of military, economic and political espionage have, by their own statements, been committed by these men. But, as the letter of Cardinal Mindszenty, purportedly written from jail, is ridiculously addressed to Archbishop Czapik, as "Cardinal of Eger," so, too, the Protestant confessions are sprinkled with howlers. One would almost conclude these are deliberate. To confess to having conversations with someone who has never yet arrived in the place where one has been; to implicate one "Burt Andrews" when there are two "Burt-Andrewses," looks almost as though the confessions themselves constituted a kind of code, through which the prisoners were sending messages. Certainly they convey two facts: that the enemy can bungle, and badly; and that, beyond the limit of human endurance: "Speak after sentence? Yea! And to the end of time," as Lionel Johnson wrote of the Anglican King Charles I.

Maurice Thorez of France, Palmiro Togliatti of Italy, Harry Pollitt of England, have gone on record that, were their countries dragged against their personal will into a war against the Soviet Union, or invaded by the Red Army pursuing an aggressor, they would consider it their duty, and the duty of every Communist, to give comfort and succor to the soldiers of the Soviet.

This chain-reaction is now world-wide. Premier Nehru has declared he has evidence of treasonable Communist activities in India; in the USA the Un-American Activities people are finding what they seek. On both sides, then, of the Iron Curtain, the issue is the same: rebellion against Princes is submission to God, Cardinal Spellman has thundered here. To the Communist State, the Church is a sinister, supra-national force; to the non-Communist State, Communism is what Communism imagines the Church to be. It is not the Church that has entered the political field; it is Communism that has entered the religious. And between these high, spiritual, all-requiring allegiances, each nation, in a still, small voice, asks our more pedestrian allegiance: taxes, social behavior, common decency, respect for law, our vote in peace, our body in war. The fifteen Protestants arraigned had behind them a long tradition of national integrity, of citizen loyalty. But they were stretched too far: Communism asked of them something no Christian has to give, because already given: the total allegiance of man, both body and soul. Their guilt is not espionage nor black marketeering, nor even free speech, nor free thought. It is free will.

Security from the Several States

IN CONTRAST with inactivity in Washington is the increase in welfare programs under consideration in a dozen states—preeminently California, New York (with the heatedly controverted Dewey program), Minnesota and Pennsylvania. Has there been of late much extension of welfare activity on the part of the states at expense of the federal government? Since 1937, for instance, grants in aid from the states to individual pensioners and institutions in their charge have tripled, but the federal government is now financing half of these two billion dollar local and state programs in comparison with supplying only a quarter of the lesser funds which were expended twelve years ago.

On the supposition that nothing much eventuates in Washington and that several of the states with newly-elected New Dealish administrations take the initiative in expanding their programs to meet the increasing needs resulting from the leveling off of the postwar boom, would things be better off than if all had been left to Congress? Obviously somewhat better, in that it is possible for the individual citizen and his neighbors to make their wishes more effective in state legislative halls than in Washington. Particularly if the states themselves take on the brunt of the financing. In New York State, the resilient Mr. Dewey proposes to take care of his bigger budget through higher state income and gasoline taxes. Business interests protest, while other groups of citizens applaud and the whole thing can be

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worked out in a democratic fashion—with a high degree of individual voter participation. (What the process should be in our poorer states, where it has been proposed with some cogency, that the federal government provide as much as three-quarters of welfare funds is not under discussion here.) What a contrast, however, if in all states and many industries groups of workers as such, or as members of various cooperative services, were able to build up funds and facilities and provide security for themselves!

A current report from Los Angeles raises doubts whether the actual difference between federal aid and state aid amounts to very much. It tells of the present jam in the lobby of the California State Employment Bureau of men and women collecting their unemployment benefits (and also of the County Employment Bureau, where in December 350,000 visits were recorded by people looking for work). This only in a somewhat seasonal lay-off period, for "there is no reason to believe that total employment in the area during the next few months will drop much below the 1948 average. . . ."

In big states and big cities there seems to be something necessarily bureaucratic and impersonal about social security and welfare programs, even though they appear to be more under individual voter and local group control than facilities and benefits stemming solely from Washington. That is the penalty we pay for mass production, proletarianization, concentration of plant and population. When the inevitable dip in the economic process occurs, and when the rootless worker dependent for his livelihood only on his job, loses that job, ordinarily he has nowhere else to turn but to the State—and this goes too for chronically ill and the disabled, the aged and the mentally ill. Those who deplore the growth of the "Welfare State" are therefore forced to bring forward a feasible alternative; they must recognize that our highly centralized security base goes right along with our highly centralized system of living and production. Leaving the actual distribution of federal benefits to the smallest and most local units might be a palliating step even if Washington still held the purse-strings. But a highly decentralized society seems the only possible alternative to an all-embracing Welfare State.

Civil Rights

SO FAR President Truman's luck with the civil rights issue has been spectacular. Defying the Democratic tradition of a solid South, he gambled on civil rights and won against the Dixiecrat revolt during the election campaign. His victory he has interpreted as a "mandate" from the people, a vindication of his politically reckless, uncompromising attitude.

Opposed now by a Democratic-Republican coalition, he has gambled again. This time the Administration has made a move to get rid of the filibuster, since this is the stymie technique by which the Southerners intend to sabotage the President's civil rights legislation. The Administration's ultimate objective in the filibuster fight is, of course, to pass the civil rights program promised in the campaign. Senator McGrath, speaking in Providence, Rhode Island, revealed the Administration's strategy when he said that the Democrats did not intend to compromise on civil rights even if it meant Congress' staying in session all summer.

Just at this time a compromise offer has come from a Southern Congressman. Representative Brooks Hays, a Democrat from Arkansas, has made a proposal on each of the four principal subjects of civil rights legislation: segregation, poll tax, anti-lynching, and the Fair Employment Practices Committee. Mr. Hays has told the House that he thinks that Southerners would accept an amendment outlawing the poll tax and that they would agree to a federal law obligating state governors to prevent lynching, with the provision that the federal government should intervene if the governors failed to act. He believes that the Supreme Court decision banning segregation in interstate travel gives the federal government sufficient power in segregation; and he proposes finally a non-penal FEPC, with a counseling service to correct discrimination in industrial hiring. Mr. Hays, a respected legislator, has some Southern support already but it cannot be said whether or not he has enough, or whether the Administration will listen to compromise.

At this point the President does not seem inclined to compromise, as Senator McGrath has indicated. And we feel that there is no reason why he should compromise in principle on his civil rights promises. However civil rights, involving as they do ingrained prejudices, fears and social habits, are not going to be legislated into practice overnight and it will be unwise for the Administration to treat Mr. Hays's proposals, however inadequate, in a high-and-mighty way. To do so is to run a serious risk of getting no civil rights legislation whatever from this already slowed-down, rebellious 81st Congress. Overcoming racial discrimination takes patience and gradual progress; legislating civil rights will take the same technique, and the Administration will do well to make up its mind to give way a little and to encourage the co-operation of genuinely progressive Southerners in the interests of civil justice. If this co-operation cannot be had without jeopardizing essential civil rights, then the Administration has every reason to be tough and uncompromising.

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Kicking Against the Goad

Evelyn Waugh

I HAVE JUST READ in a London newspaper the following paragraph: "Evelyn Waugh is in trouble. He's being quoted from coast to coast (of U.S.A.) as saying that Americans heat their rooms to 75 degrees, nail down the windows, chew colored bubble gum, keep their radios on all day and talk too much — poor Waugh is being kicked all the way down Main Street."

No man of honor patiently submits to kicking, but I cannot pretend that at my own fireside, three thousand miles from Mainstreet, I have found the experience unendurable. Moreover, I am very sure that the countless Americans whose friendship I value, took no part in the outrage. I should, not, therefore, protest were it not that the incident seems to me a tiny window opening upon very wide prospects of general misunderstanding.

First, as regards the incident. Certain trades and classes seek personal publicity; not so respectable writers, for their entire vocation is one of self-expression and it seems obvious to them that if they cannot make themselves understood in years of laborious writing, they will not succeed in a few minutes of conversation. So when we see interviewers advancing, we fly. But on the last day of a recent, happy visit to the USA, I was caught by a very young lady and talked earnestly to her for nearly an hour. She asked what had impressed me most in America. I said the Trappist Monastery in Kentucky. It transpired that the wretched girl was as ignorant of the simplest truths of Christianity as Topsy in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. My apostolic zeal was roused, and, frankly, I preached to her. In particular, I told her about monasticism. It is a subject I have at heart because I believe that we are returning to a stage when on the supernatural plane only heroic prayer can save us and, when on the natural plane, the cloister offers a saner and more civilized life than "the world." There was little need to expatiate on this latter point in regard to Europe and Asia, where oppression, anarchy, famine and massacre are commonplaces, but when I found her bewildered by the physical austerities of the Trappist rule, I did point out that her own way of life had its painful features —overheated rooms, radio, and so forth.

The puzzled catechumen then cabled to London some fragments of her instruction. There a sub-editor plied his hideous trade. What he left was picked up by correspondents in London and cabled back to sub-editors in New York, so that eventually these few trite and irrelevant comments were all that emerged from my unaccustomed and well meant flow of eloquence. It was my own fault. I should have known better than to give tongue. It is not the least importance that one foreign visitor should have been made a fool of, but it is important that the process is being repeated hourly in hundreds of similar cases, with the result that incalculable volumes of malice and misunderstanding are being constantly generated. And that is a bad thing for all of us.

A second alarming thought follows; one affecting the whole relationship of the public to a writer, and especially to a foreign writer. It is plain to me from the comments on this interview that the general reader believes he is doing the writer a great personal kindness in buying his books.

Now when I buy a new hat, I do so because I need one. I go to a hatter who, I believe, knows his job. If the hat disintegrated in the first fall of rain, I should make a row about it. But I do not assume that because I have bought a hat from him the hatter is in honor bound to think my head an object of reverence. Nor do I suppose I am entitled to a photograph of the hatter's mother and to an itemized account of his private life. I do not expect the hatter to love me. And yet hats are more costly than books and, in some cases, of less permanent value. But readers, even when they have not bought a book at all but merely borrowed it, do apparently sincerely believe that a writer is bound to them by ties of the most tender affection and gratitude.

*

IT SO happens that I like visiting America, love and respect countless Americans, and knowing their peculiar sensitiveness, take pains not to make the kind of criticisms of them that I should freely make of any other nation, most of all my own. But there are many European writers who have, perhaps, not been so fortunate as I have in the Americans they have met, and therefore strongly dislike the country and strongly say so. At once the whine goes up.

(*cont. on page* 536)

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Twenty Five Years

1949 marks The Commonweal's twenty-fifth anniversary. That it has arrived at this age should be gratifying to the benefactors who have helped to sustain it, and to the subscribers and readers whose responsive co-operation has had so much to do with its publication and its policies. To them is due in large part the recognition which The Commonweal receives as the only general review expressing the viewpoint of American Catholic laymen on contemporary political and cultural affairs.

We feel now that this Silver Anniversary belongs to a community of all those who have participated in our effort, inspired as it is by the idea of a Christian culture and commonwealth. But the role of The Commonweal could be immeasurably greater.

If The Commonweal is to continue publication after Easter and achieve its full stature, it must have additional funds. With this in mind some friends of the magazine have formed a Silver Jubilee Committee; the members are: Dorothy Day, Waldemar Gurian, Helen Iswolsky, Jerome G. Kerwin, Emmet Lavery, Jacques Maritain, Theodore Maynard, Thomas Merton, Mary Perkins, J. F. Powers, Henry Rago, Frank J. Sheed, Mason Wade, and Helen C. White.

A letter which the Committee has just sent out proposes a 25th Anniversary Fund of $50,000, to be subscribed in $25 shares. In return for your gift of one or more shares The Commonweal will send you an attractive Silver Jubilee Certificate inscribed with your name and acknowledging your participation. (Since this is a long-range program as well as an emergency measure, shares may be paid for in instalments.) From week to week The Commonweal will report the progress of our common effort to make the Silver Jubilee Fund a success.

For upon the success of this fund depends the future of The Commonweal. We hope that we can count on our readers to see it through.

THE EDITORS

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"Boohoo, the beast! We buy his books, and yet he does not love us. He only loves our dollars." But that is the precise nature of the transaction. The writer sweats to write well; the reader sweats to make dollars; writer and reader exchange books for dollars.

And this raises the most curious point of all. There does seem to be in modern industrial society a popular belief that when an exchange takes place of goods and money, the party who pays the money has, somehow, conferred a benefit on the party who delivers the goods. This is a mercantile system gone stark crazy, for money is quite valueless except as the symbol of the goods for which it can be exchanged. When I walk out of my hatter's, I have on my head an object which he has been at great pains to make, and I have chosen as fulfilling my need, an object which will retain its character and usefulness for years to come. I leave him with some bits of paper which may in an hour, through a whim of the government, become quite valueless. Money is only useful when you get rid of it. It is like the odd card in "Old Maid"; the player who is finally left with it, has lost. That is a thought which should vex the garrison at Fort Knox.

Contemporary German Writers

Max Fischer

IN THE 19th century the Germans were respected as a nation of profound thinkers and scientists, of great poets and musicians. To the Napoleonic world, intoxicated by conquest and glory, Mme. de Stael interpreted the Germans as Europe's most idealistic people. Washington Irving, George Ticknor, Longfellow and many other prominent Americans made their "grand tour" to Germany to find there European culture at its best. This is very different, indeed, from the mentality of the last decade when the public opinion of the West treated the Germans like a ferocious people from the African jungles. As a matter of fact, the terror of the thirteen infamous Hitler years is as unrepresentative of the deeper layers of the German soul as Stalin's dictatorship is unrepresentative of the religious depth of the Russian soul.

Most of the German refugee writers who either voluntarily, or to save their lives, turned their backs on their fatherland believed that German culture had emigrated with them. But, while many German scholars revitalized science in the countries they went to, the German poets and creative prose writers suffered much more by the simple fact that they came to countries with different languages. Even their comrades-in-exile were too absorbed by making a living in a new country to give much attention to literary work. Thus the uprooted writers remained without a wide German audience and either adjusted themselves to the taste of foreign readers (some of them even to the use of a foreign language) or were forced to give up their former profession.

The main stream of German literature continued to flow within Germany and the other German-speaking countries of Europe (Switzerland, Austria). Despite all Nazi propaganda and censorship, the production of good fiction and non-fiction did not cease completely. The literature became less experimental than it had been in the twenties, the expression of emotion less noisy, the substance very concentrated and matter-of-fact. Some poetry, with political and religious tendencies offensive to the ruling gang, was published illegally, printed by secret presses, or smuggled across the borders from Switzerland or the Alsace. When the Third Reich collapsed and our victorious armies raised again the Iron Curtain between Germany and the West, there was not the vacuum many had expected; belles-lettres were flourishing, with new and remarkable works of well-known authors and with an abundance of forceful younger talent.

*

YET, the thirteen infamous years of Nazism are a deep incision in the history of German literature. Most of the great and acknowledged poets of the older generation passed away. Two of them had not survived the late twenties: *Rainer Maria Rilke,* the sensitive and exalted lyric poet, who had also impressed France and the English-speaking world, died in 1926, and *Hugo von Hofmannsthal,* the symbolic poet, novelist, dramatist and author of most of Richard Strauss' librettos, died in 1929.

Stefan George, the delicate lyric poet, who abhorred the vulgarities of life and admonished the German youth not to squander its strength, refused the honors offered him by the Hitler régime. Though sixty-five years old and in bad health, the terrified poet fled to Switzerland, where he died at the end of the first Nazi year.

Alfred Mombert, the creator of highly emotional poetic cycles, whose *Sfaira der Alte* (Sfaira

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the Aged), published in 1936, is the deepest expression of love of the German soil found in any poet of the Third Reich period, was arrested in the fall of 1940 as a "non-Aryan" and dragged away to the concentration camp of Gurs, France. Thanks to the energy of a Swiss friend, he too was able to reach Switzerland where he died in the spring of 1942.

Gerhardt Hauptmann, the celebrated dramatist who had been the most famous exponent of German naturalism, died in 1946, and *Ricarda Huch,* the leading woman writer of her generation, renowned both as a novelist and a lyric poet, died in 1947. The old guard of eminent German writers is thus either extinguished or lives abroad (Hermann Hesse, Thomas and Heinrich Mann), and the focus of public attention has come to rest on some middle-aged poets, who were not yet very popular before the Hitler years, and on young talents, unknown to those who left Germany before the Second World War.

*

THE OLDEST of the writers much discussed nowadays is *Ernst Wiechert,* born in 1887 in a lonely forester's home in East Prussia, where West meets East. The dense forest, the vast moors, the beautiful lakes and the fantastic fairytales of his homeland are the background of most of his novels and short stories. They are outstanding in honest simplicity of expression, with remarkable spirituality and with strong, tart human characters who struggle with the commandments of the Christian faith.

But Wiechert was not only a genuine poet but a man of "civic" courage, the lack of which among the Germans had been deplored by Bismarck. The poet made impressive speeches to the German youth, especially in 1934 and 1936, in which he asserted with the greatest frankness that right should triumph over brutal might—the most antagonistic thesis possible against Nazism. In 1938, he protested against the imprisonment of Pastor Niemöller, the leader of the "Confessional Church" (the movement within the Protestant Church that refused to bow before Nazi principles). Thereupon the Gestapo put Wiechert into Buchenwald. His book *Der Totenwald* (The Forest of the Dead) is perhaps the most touching description of the barbarous life in the Nazi camps—a memorial to those victims who gave everything they had in order to fight for human dignity.

Related to the restrained epic art of Wiechert is a younger poet, *Waldemar Augustiny.* His voluminous novel *Die Grosse Flut* (The Great Flood) tells the story of desperate human fight against the forces of nature. Disdaining the pathos of the average historical novel, Augustiny's style is of simple clarity, yet many things remain in a realm beyond human comprehension, as in the Scandinavian sagas.

Werner Bergengruen (born in 1892 in Riga, Latvia) writes his numerous historical novels and short stories in an objective manner, and avoids that wallowing in psychoanalysis practiced by the older generation. He reminds one of the great narrative art of Heinrich von Kleist, who in his short stories made the facts alone speak.

Bergengruen's verse is decidedly religious in an undeclamatory, restrained way; it developed remarkable terseness and force during the Nazi years. His poems went secretly from hand to hand in mimeographed copies, as manifestations against the régime. But when the Third Reich collapsed, the anti-Nazi poet did not face merely the problem of German guilt, but also the crisis of European morality. He complained that those who were not tried boasted of their strength, that those who were not tempted were loudest in blaming the Germans. He warns all to beware of pharisaic self-satisfaction: "Völker der Welt, der Ruf des Gerichts gilt uns allen" (Nations of the earth, the call of judgment means us all).

*

REINHOLD SCHNEIDER (born 1903 in Baden-Baden) was known before the Nazi years only to a small literary circle which appreciated his profound and superbly written books on Portuguese, Spanish and British history. They blend the meticulous research of the historian with a sophisticated poet's narration and have a Catholic, metaphysical outlook. In view of the broad contemplation and outspoken aestheticism of Schneider's early books, one does not expect him to become a political fighter. But his abhorrence of the Nazi régime gave him a new impetus. His disdain of the flimsy racial doctrines of the Hitlerites inspired his story, *Las Casas vor Karl dem Fünften* (Las Casas before Charles V) which has been published in this country under the inappropriate title *Imperial Mission.* The poet symbolizes the Nazi persecution of allegedly inferior races by telling of the Spanish suppression of the Indians.

While Hitler was in power, Schneider became the voice of the "other Germany," the voice of a religious conscience alarmed by the anti-Christian tendencies of the Third Reich. More and more his writings ceased to be *"l'art pour l'art."* They became an instrument of moral edification. Since the triumph of the Enlightenment philosophy, moral poetry was held outmoded by German men of letters. It was claimed that the ideas and the vocabularies of preaching and poetry do not blend together, that rhetoric is outside the realm of pure art. Furthermore, since the times of Nietzsche, German poets thought it an offense to be called moralists. The arts

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were believed to be "beyond Good and Evil." Schneider fiercely repudiated the modern concept that the arts are independent of ethical responsibility. Poetry to him was of divine origin and was obliged to serve the cause of God. Beside numerous sermon-like essays, he wrote more than a dozen short stories that really were ever new parables suggesting that we should obey God more than Caesar. The poet not only had the strength to resist the moral decay of his time, but did more; he forced the hearts of his readers upwards: *sursum corda.*

Congenial friends printed his writings illegally and spread them in pamphlets especially among the Christian youth. The most popular of these booklets contained cycles of poems that praised the knighthood of the defenders of the Faith against the pagan hero worship of the Nazis. Like the poets of the French resistance movement, Schneider chose the classical form of the sonnet for his accusation and judgment of the men in power, thus clothing his ardent plea in the most conservative form. With the insight of the true poet he foresaw that the "Leader" was hunted, not leading, that the sinister forces of hell could bring no healing to German suffering but only led to involving the nation in sin. In the midst of godless mass hysteria Schneider pointed to the German guilt and praised the power of prayer, the eternal might of Truth, the symbol of the Cross, certain to survive the Crooked Cross.

German cultural life between the two world wars had been marked by moral disintegration, by the questioning of all values and a paralysis of human will. The beginnings of National Socialism had been fascinating for many Germans, since they seemed to see in it the end of scepticism and disillusion, and it seemed to give unequivocal answers to any questions. Schneider unveiled the irresponsibility of the Nazis and insisted that only moral responsibility could give Germans the answers they needed.

Schneider's poems were a most impressive manifestation of Christian faith, undisturbed by personal peril and the political doctrines of his time. Many minor poets took up this tune, after the defeat was evident. Schneider's recent book *Herz am Erdensaume* (Heart on the Edge of the Earth) has no more didactic overtones; his battle on earth is over; his lyrical confessions speak mostly of his longing for Heaven.

*

THOUGH few writers are devoted to the Church as are the two eminent Catholic writers Bergengruen and Schneider, a trend leading from paganism to Christianity goes through the best literature of the last decade. Even *Ernst Jünger* (born 1895 in Heidelberg), who wrote enthusiastic descriptions of his military experiences during the First World War, experienced a great conversion: he recognized the hitherto admired world of Force as "the world of the lower spirits," of the "lemurs," and he became aware that force violates the liberty and dignity of man.

This change of mind became evident in his symbolic novel *Auf den Marmorklippen* (On the Marble Cliffs), published shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, and in the diary which he kept during the war. Its first part has been published under the title *Gärten und Strassen* (Gardens and Streets), while the second part and a most interesting pamphlet "The Peace" are not permitted to be published in Germany, since the occupation authorities seem to ignore Jünger's change of mind and classify the present champion of occidental solidarity still as a "militarist." In the French zone, however, his books may be bought in translation, published in Paris.

The development of Ernst Jünger is almost an exemplary "re-education" from paganism to Christian ethics, from German chauvinism to the unity of the West. The admired prose writer, whose brilliant style, at the same time mystical and concise, impressed the young generation, would certainly bear greater influence than the righteous phrases of people who sucked democracy and pacifism with their mother's milk. The literary policy of our occupation authorities should no longer be handled by fossils from the Morgenthau period.

Albrecht Haushofer (born 1903 in Munich) impressed the young generation in quite another way: by living and dying for the resistance movement against the Nazis, a movement of Conservatives and Liberals, which culminated in the unsuccessful attempt on Hitler's life, and which will survive mainly in the sonnets which he secretly wrote in his prison cell in Moabit (a district of Berlin). They were found in his hands after his execution. Published under the title *Moabiter Sonette* (Moabit Sonnets), they were his testament to the world.

His father was the famous geopolitician Karl Haushofer whose theories had great influence on the foreign policy of the Nazi régime. Young Haushofer became a professor at the University of Berlin and a member of the Foreign Office. But more and more he developed from an oppositional scientist and diplomat to an illegal fighter against the Nazi movement.

His poems are not only verses of political passion but very human documents, telling the conflicts between himself and his father, the heartaches of his mother, the prison life of a man who is certain that death is very near.

Though brought up in Upper Bavaria, Haushofer was much influenced by his Berlin friends,

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most of whom were Protestants and Prussians. His sonnets have not a Catholic tenor like Schneider's, but a rigid feeling of moral duty, something of Kant's categorical imperative. But his urge for moral action, which means for him to fight the tyrant, comes from sympathy with the suffering and oppressed, and is decidedly Christian.

★

ELISABETH LANGGASSER (born in 1899 in Alzey) is perhaps the most talented poetess of Germany today—in any case the one most widely discussed among the younger literati. Before Hitler came to power, she had a modest success with short stories and poems full of exorbitant sensuality and pagan mythology. Her sufferings during the "thirteen cursed years" deepened her inner life. The best-known fruit of her transformation is one of the strangest German novels ever written: *Das unauslöschliche Siegel* (The Unextinguishable Seal). The title means the imprint of baptism; the main protagonist is a Jew converted to Catholicism. But the book fails to give a coherent story of Herr Belfontaine's external or inner life. The supposed hero of her novel emerges from time to time, after having been left behind for long stretches of the road, and the various phases of his spiritual development follow each other without any sign of an effort on his part.

Elisabeth Langgässer wrote to this reviewer that the idea of an epic tied to place and time is "old-fashioned." In fact, she binds very diverse episodes together, taking place pell-mell and at different periods of time in Germany or in France. And these episodes are written partly in a very naturalistic and partly in a very spiritual style. Her characters are moving like puppets drawn by wires in a world between God and Devil. Most of them are embarked on a course which they are powerless to leave. We would expect that a book which puts the Sacrament of Baptism in the center is full of hope and spiritual uplift. But as a matter of fact the poetess prefers to linger in the sphere of sin and especially of sexuality. In this field very little is left to imagination: we have to get through a morass of perversions and through a sordid story of Lesbian love which ends in self-destruction. Her book reads like a collection of most skilfully written fragments, often rich in tension and atmosphere, but insufficiently connected by some lofty ideas, and with strange and sudden transformations of character, even with changes of identity.

A work of art, however transcendental it may be, needs an inner order and an intelligible composition. The works of Kafka, Wilder and Claudel, with which the poetess likes to compare her work, have an imminent coherence; Kafka is even obsessed by a fanatic logicism.

It is an error to assume that poetry centered in a spiritual realm is a new feature of modern literature. Dante's *Divina Comedia*, for instance, is certainly in this artistic category. But it is nevertheless an exemplary work of poetic order, establishing a most carefully weighed balance between sin and merit. Such a work brings to the reader a feeling of the whole spiritual cosmos and integrates each single episode in an adequate proportion, into the symmetry of the whole. Langgässer's novel gives the feeling of chaos, through which you hear only sometimes a timid Advent. It is evident that the gifted poetess is on her way toward a Christian world but that she has not yet been able to realize fully her vision in this novel, which may be followed, we hope, by spiritually and poetically more perfect works.

If we compare the Catholic world of Elizabeth Langgässer with that of Schneider, it is obvious that the poetess lacks the element that prevails in Schneider's poetry: the appeal to the free human will which has a wide range of liberty to decide between temptation and spiritual ascent.

The Christian emotion that came over Elisabeth Langgässer has transformed also her lyrical production. The poetess who formerly praised the fertility of the bios, admonishes us now in nearly apocalyptical verses, from the heights of the ethos. In an exalted style she proclaims the transitoriness of life on earth.

Finally there is the young generation, those who were still children when Hitler came to power. They are not at all a "lost generation." There is much independent thought and beauty of language in the writing of *Rudolf Hagestange*, whose rhetorical and poetical language reminds one of Schiller. *Wolf Uecker* is an outspoken poet concentrating on the horrors of the Nazi inferno. *Dagmar Nick* expresses her feeling of guilt at the atrocities of the concentration camps, and of the sufferings of the German expellees from the East. Her slim volume of verse *Märtyrer* (Martyrs) is remarkable in sentiment and form, a promise for the future.

★

THESE hints, indicating the character and tone of contemporary German literature, can draw attention only to a few outstanding poets. We may have overlooked some writers whose work has not yet reached this side of the Atlantic. But even our small selection demonstrates that the tradition of great German literature is still alive, that it has brought forth new blossoms and fruits. The poetic production of vanquished Germany is able to compete with that of the victorious countries in power of expression, in Christian emotion and in human dignity.

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A Walk After Dark

A cloudless night like this
Can set the spirit soaring;
After a tiring day
The clockwork spectacle is
Impressive in a slightly boring
Eighteenth-century way.

It soothed adolescence a lot
To meet so shameless a stare;
The things I did could not
Be as shocking as they said
If that would still be there
After the shocked were dead.

Now, unready to die
But already at the stage
When one starts to dislike the young,
I am glad those points in the sky
May also be reckoned among
The creatures of middle-age.

It's cosier thinking of night
As more an Old People's Home
Than a shed for a faultless machine,
That the red pre-Cambrian light
Is gone like Imperial Rome
Or myself at seventeen.

Yet however much we may like
The stoic manner in which
The classical authors wrote,
Only the young and the rich
Have the nerve or the figure to strike
The lacrimae rerum note.

For this moment stalks abroad
Like the last, and its wronged again
Whimper and are ignored,
And the truth cannot be hid;
Somebody chose their pain,
What needn't have happened did.

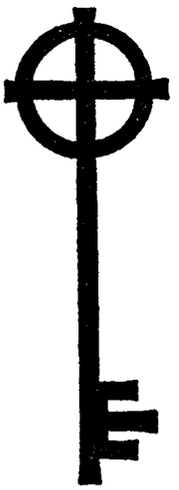
Occurring this very night.
By no established rule,
Some event may already have hurled
Its first little No at the right
Of the laws we accept to school
Our post-diluvian world:

But the stars burn on overhead,
Unconscious of final ends,
As I walk home to bed,
Asking what judgment waits
My person, all my friends,
And these United States.

W. H. Auden.

Symbols of Christ

DAMASUS WINZEN



The Key of David

"And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder: and he shall open and none shall shut: and he shall shut, and none shall open."
(*Isaias* 22, 22).

"And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."
(*Matthew* 16, 19).

"Thus says the Holy one, the True one, He Who has the key of David, He Who opens and no one shuts, and Who shuts and no one opens."
(*Apoc.* 3, 7).

★

He who holds the keys of the house wields power over it. When a city surrenders, the keys are brought to the conqueror, not only the keys of the gates, but also the keys of the storehouse and those of the prison house as well.

The "power of the keys" is threefold: over the entrance gate to admit or to exclude, over the prison to punish or to condone, over the storehouse and the treasure to feed and to reward.

Isaias tells us (22, 22) how Eljakim received the "key of the house of David" and, thence, received full power over the royal palace and the whole kingdom as administrator and representative of the king.

Eljakim is an archetype of the Messias, the "offspring of David," to whom is given, at the end of time, full power over the messianic kingdom which was promised to the house of David. The glorified and exalted Christ has received from His Heavenly Father the "key of David" (*Apoc.* 3, 7) with its threefold power. Through

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His death he has conquered death and possesses "the keys of Death and of Hades" (*Apoc.* 1, 18) to "bring the prisoners out of the prison house, them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (O Antiphon). He has power over the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. All its citizens are written in the "book of life of the Lamb" (*Apoc.* 21, 27). Finally the risen Christ has the key to the heavenly store house, for, as Saint Peter says (*Acts* 2, 23), "exalted by the right hand of God, and receiving from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this Spirit which you see and hear."

Communications

AFFIRMATIVE APPROACH

Pittsburgh 17, Pennsylvania.

TO the Editors: I fear that many of your readers may not have paid particular attention to the quotation of Bishop James E. Walsh in an editorial, your issue of February 4, 1949. He is reported as writing from Shanghai to Maryknoll: "I do not know what will happen when the Communists arrive, but I intend to remain as long as the Holy See permits. After all, the Communists need to be converted, too."

That was written as becomes a true spiritual son of Bishop James A. Walsh and "Priest" Price. It is an affirmative approach to a problem which can only be solved as Bishop Walsh indicates. No bomb, atomic or otherwise, no planes, no army, no conquest but a spiritual one. Why shouldn't we give it a trial? Why not a spiritual underground in Russia? Why not tell our people the reason for the vernacular prayer after a Low Mass. Isn't there a Father Dominic some place in the world today? Of course there is. So let us put him to work. He will find at least one Newman.

JOHN O'CONNOR, JR.

THE INDONESIAN PROBLEM

Wassenaar, Holland.

TO the Editors: Since 1922 Indonesia has been an integral part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which, by the way, has no colonies but only overseas parts. The Dutch have been in Indonesia for more than three centuries and there never existed anything like a color bar nor was the native population exterminated—the reverse, the population increased tenfold.

Thousands of Dutch missionaries and laymen have, during these three centuries, devoted their lives to the conversion and education of millions of Indonesians. And the Netherlands Indonesian Government helped them wherever it could. You will no doubt all agree with me that it would be worse than nonsense to call these unselfish men and women imperialists. The standard of living in Indonesia was the highest in all East Asia and the native population was religious and, consequently, peaceful and contented.

But everything changed from the moment the Japs arrived. I was not there myself, happening to be at the time in one of the German concentration camps. But the facts were told to me by missionaries who were there and I do not think there is any reason to doubt their words. Before I tell you about the things that happened after the Japs occupied Java, I should like to say that, personally, I strongly sympathize with an independent United States of Indonesia, but I think we must make quite sure that Indonesia becomes, neither militarily nor politically, a bridgehead for communism or fascism.

Almost immediately after the occupation of Java in 1942, the Japanese Propaganda Service started not only to induce the population to abstain from sabotage but also to encourage and promote cooperation with the Japanese Military Government. Japanese-sponsored organizations covering practically all parts of Indonesian social life sprang up like mushrooms. They were based on the German "Füehrer Principle" and promoted fascist ideas. Contacts were made with prominent, anti-Dutch, Indonesians such as Mr. Hatta and Mr. Sukarno.

On March 9, 1943, the so-called "Putera" (Pusat Tenoga Rakjit) was founded and, resembling in many respects the German National Socialist Party, it was supposed to incorporate all the Indonesian parties and movements. Its leaders were nearly in all cases trained by the Japs and it was quite obvious that the "Putera" was meant to be a tool in the hands of the occupants.

But instead it became very strong and independent and the Japs fearing some "underground" action replaced it by another party, the "Djawa Hoko Kay" which means "political corporation of Java"; in this party Mr. Hatta and Mr. Sukarno played a great rôle. A sort of home-guard was formed, the "Barisan Pelopaz," a Jap-controlled para-military organization of which a part acted as Mr. Sukarno's bodyguard. The Indonesian youth too had to be made "politically minded" and the Japs took this—for them so important a task—into their own hands. They created the "Seinendan" and the members received a thorough military training from Japanese NCO's and officers. This Seinendan still existed last year under the name of "Angkatan Pemuda Indonesia" or API. No other youth organizations, Protestant or Catholic, were allowed.

In every dessa (native village) the occupants formed an auxiliary police, the "Kaybudan," whose task was mainly espionage and operations against enemy parachutists (pilots) and Europeans. They were not dressed in uniforms but wore badges. Further there were the Hayho's, the Indonesian soldiers who had volunteered in the Japanese Army. Later, in 1943, a separate Jap-controlled Indonesian Army was created, "Sukarilla" (Peta). They were of course also trained and equipped by the Japs. Their commander was the Japanese C. in C. in Java. The Japanese Navy too recruited an Indonesian auxiliary corps called the "Kaygun Hayho." They were used for the defense of Java against the Allies.

The propaganda against the Dutch and the Europeans in general was intense and extremely effective and made, without the slightest doubt, a deep and long lasting impression on the Javanese population; the idea was to bring them so far that they would "tjingtjang" (cut in slices) every European at first sight.

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The Japanese officer in command of the Southern Area postponed the capitulation of his forces more than a week, using all sorts of excuses in order to give the Indonesian Republican movement their chance. On August 7, 1945, he formed a committee to prepare the independence of the "Indonesian Republic;" both Mr. Hatta and Mr. Sukarno were members of this committee. At a meeting, directly after his return by plane from the Japanese HQ in Saigon (August 11, 1945) Mr. Sukarno appeared to have the permission of the Japanese authorities to proclaim the "Republic of Indonesia."

The arrival of the Allied Forces took a long time Sukarno had time till August 23, 1945, the day the Japs capitulated in Java. One of the very first acts of the New Indonesian Government was the forming of an army; it consisted entirely of former soldiers, NCO's and officers of the Hayho and Peta. At that time they called it BKR, later it became known as TNI. Communist agents, Indonesians trained in Moscow, appeared and had little or no difficulty influencing the population. After four years of intensive Jap propaganda they were ready to believe anything.

Thus was the situation when General Christison arrived to "liberate" Java. His task proved to be a thankless job. So anti-European were the Indonesians that the General disliked the idea of allowing the thousands of women and children out of the concentration camps. The things that happened to these European women in these camps, I cannot describe here. But I am quite certain that you too will doubt whether these people deserve to be regarded as "representatives" of their nation.

CLEMENT DE HAAS.

THIS very able presentation of the Dutch feeling in the Indonesian matter presents only one aspect of the question; it does not seem to take into sufficient account the evils resulting from the colonial, master-exploited relationship. THE EDITORS.

FOOD PARCELS

RECENT appeals for food packages for religious houses caring for the needy include:

Rev. Henri Perrin, S.J.
16 rue de Seine
Vannes (near Paris), France

Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus
21 Jacobstrasse
Aachen, Western Zone, Germany

Rev. Mother Superior
Dominikanerinnen Convent
Schlossbergasse 17, Hacking
Vienna 13, Austria

Mother Antoinette Zaleska
Sacre Coeur, Polska Wies
p. Pobiedziska
Poznan, Poland

CARE (50 Broad Street, New York 4, N. Y.) and SAFE of 40 Exchange Place, New York 5, N. Y., have standard $10 food packages, while CARE is emphasizing this time of year $4 seed packages.

The Stage & Screen

Blood Wedding

I MUST immediately admit to two difficulties in confronting New Stages' production of the first part of Garcia Lorca's tragic trilogy. The first hazard will be that no portion of the piece—neither this first section, nor "Yerma," nor "The House of Bernarda Alba"—strikes me as translatable nor possible American material; and the second, that due to a ticket rearrangement of my own, I was constrained to review the production from the very first row of the house. The latter hardship is a severe one in an offering where the over-all physical pattern is extremely important and the stage picture always primary. Bathed in the reflected blur of spots and arcs, one cannot of course achieve the degree of concentration necessary to follow an alien fable, and most of all, one cannot see sufficiently to trace the stage movement. I feel the most I can offer by way of criticism is that while a good many of the accents spoken were patently wrong, the play was handled faithfully, sometimes skilfully, by the actors, and a total audience (full house) appeared to be stimulated.

However, there is more to the Lorca problem than this and I can think of no better way of posing it than by quoting George Jean Nathan's findings. Mr. Nathan seems to think that no barriers of language, idiom, custom, philosophy, nor theology should deny such a play's reception by a civilized audience. He sensibly concedes that Lorca is "one of the authentic poets of the twentieth century. . . ." And his main conclusion is that the average (American) audience, while duty-bound to admire the classics, has, on the other hand, "small understanding and appreciation of, and small use for, any real poet." This same audience, Mr. Nathan feels, demands a "dramaturgy full of fancy externals. . . ." It cannot take "a dramatist like this Lorca who concerns himself not so much with the outer emotions of his actors as with the inner emotions of his characters, who realizes that the violence of passion is not necessarily best to be portrayed with violence of language. . . ."

Now, here there is an esthetic point which must be examined and one is grateful to Mr. Nathan for having raised it, however silly he may be in designating Lorca's language as non-violent, and however deliberately ambiguous he may be in choosing his terms. That point will concern *dramatic* poetry as opposed to the *lyric* kind, and it will embrace the practice of all of the playwright-poets in our language, including the Irish, whose inspiration springs either from Shakespeare or Whitman. The trick about *dramatic* poetry (in defiance of Mr. Nathan) will be that it exactly rhythms all of the "outer emotions" in order to achieve the "inner" ones. Perhaps only G.B.S. has been intelligent enough to realize that Shakespeare, for instance, has become largely a lyric poet for his and our generation, and even his father's. We do not remember, respect, nor understand his clowns,

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comics, servants, nor their jokes: (his externals). What we do remember and repeat are his grand soliloquies; and we repeat them as lyrics, assess them as readings by actors without any cues at all. We repeat Hamlet at the cost of Osric; we quote Viola and (omitting the scholars), ignore the incessant Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. Expedient cutting spares us all, saving only the lyricism and the action, in our productions of these works.

I will submit that it is our critical refusal of Mr. Nathan's "fancy externals" which has delivered our serious stage to the provincial, else pretentiously literary, morass of the present: the Maxwell Anderson non-historical non-sense, the sprawled Corwinian Whitmanesque rhapsody. What we have never heard metered in words on our stage is exactly the external tempo of our days: the traffic, the telephones, the air-hum, the subways, typewriters, the endless cocktail inwit. We have always (critically and theatrically) been expected to achieve the great solitary reflection of pentameters without ever the preparation of the hectic dimeters of our cities and our time; and the monometer of our bomb.

To return to Lorca, there is, of course, no question of his stature as a lyric poet. And I believe there is no question of his stature as a dramatic poet. But I have not reached this judgment in contemplation of his famous trilogy. These dark, brooding, enclosed, Peasant dramas are beyond me. As I cannot recognize their "externals," I cannot honestly feel I have reached their drama. On the other hand, his last surrealistic play, "If Five Years Pass" seems to me one of the most important formal achievements in the modern theatre. Its "outer emotions" are universal, and its scheme of dramaturgy, proceeding, as it does, illogically, does indeed rear a pure lyric into drama. The same scheme has been employed in prose by Gertrude Stein.

I suppose the simple conclusion to a tedious essay will be that we shall have dramatic poetry current on our stage just whenever we have a dramatic criticism capable of assessing it and preparing for it. I wish Mr. Nathan would get on with his job. He should remember that not one of our practicing poets has ever been critically persuaded to try the physical stage, and he should ask himself, why? (*at New Stages Theatre*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Action with a Message

WITHOUT any doubt Hollywood's strongest indictment against American slums is to be found in *"Knock On Any Door."* During the course of the film's long and well-handled courtroom scenes, in which lawyer Humphrey Bogart is defending young Nick Romano, played by newcomer John Derek, who is accused of killing a policeman, we are shown a series of flashbacks that are complete with all the sordid details of slum life. In Willard Motley's novel, from which Daniel Taradash and John Monks, Jr., wrote their good script, the locale is Chicago, but in the movie the place could be any large American city where the poor are crowded together and live under conditions in which the only hope is through escape. The film makes it clear that Nick was helped from time to time, but he was not strong enough to get away from the neighborhoods that breed crime. There were many cards stacked against Nick: the death of his father in prison, his boyhood companions, the mistreatment he received in reform school, his inability to hold a job afterward, and perhaps his own pretty, weak face which developed a look of defiance and a sneer as he spouted his favorite motto: 'Live fast, die young and have a good-looking corpse."

Director Nicholas Ray has used his large cast well; most of these actors are not known, and their good performances plus the authentic backgrounds lend an atmosphere of authenticity to the grim, believable story. Cinematically the film moves at a fast pace; and while the result can hardly be called entertainment, it has a fascinating quality that holds us from beginning to end. This is mainly due to the picture's success in making us feel in part responsible for Nick's moral breakdown. We have to help Nick save himself. As long as we permit slums we can knock on any door and find Nick Romano.

Another new film that has a thing or two to say about the importance of character-building background and early education is *"Down to the Sea in Ships."* Actually this is an action picture about sailing and whaling in the 1880's, but its plot also has a great deal to do with a youngster (Dean Stockwell) who doesn't take too well to book learning and with the two men who try to put a little knowledge into his head in spite of his resistance. Another theme is introduced in connection with these two men: the captain who is the boy's grandfather (Lionel Barrymore) eventually becomes jealous of the first-mate (Richard Widmark) to whom he assigned the task of teaching the boy and who becomes an idol in the boy's eyes. While the various elements of this plot are being developed and worked to a big climax, we are given plenty of salt water, storms, blowing whales, and a thrilling adventure with an iceberg. Henry Hathaway has directed the all-male cast well; and once the movie gets beyond its early scenes that are soggy with sentiment, it becomes quite an absorbing yarn.

"The Fighting O'Flynn" is just the kind of a satire on swashbuckling films that we have needed for a long time. Not only its script (which is a rewritten version of a Justin Huntly McCarthy story about an attempted Napoleonic invasion of Ireland) but also its good cast are very much in the spirit of the burlesque; and fun is poked at the Irish, the English, the good old days as well as at duelling and all high falutin' costume dramas and movies about derring-do. Director Arthur Pierson lets his cast play to the hilt, and the result has a gay sort of charm not usual in this type of film. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., bounces and bounds and never uses stairs when there's a wall or roof to climb. Helena Carter is touchingly defenseless and pretty, as the heroine, while Patricia Medina is equally pretty and slightly daft as a superstitious Irish lass. Richard Greene sneers and leers handsomely as the villain. Arthur Shields and J. M. Kerrigan add just the right touches to kid all Abbey Players and the plays that came to us from that Synge-Yeats-Gregory school.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Italy's Christian Workers Oppose Communist "Non-Cooperation" Campaign

ALL-OUT opposition against the Communist-sponsored "non-cooperation campaign in Italy's industries was advocated by the national leaders of the Christian Workers' Association (ACLI) at a meeting held here February 16. The refusal of labor unions to bargain collectively with the employers, as advocated by Communist leaders, amounts to "undermining the foundation of a democratic social order and to sabotaging national reconstruction," the meeting declared. On the other hand, ACLI affirmed that such an extremist attitude on the part of labor leaders "has found a favorable atmosphere for its development because of the indifference of many employers towards their obligations concerning the rights of labor" and has also been favored by "the present socio-economic structure (in Italy) which does not yet recognize labor's rights to the place which it ought to occupy in each industrial enterprise."

The ACLI meeting decided to oppose Communist "non-cooperation" propaganda by a well-integrated counter-campaign. In addition, it decided to address certain demands to the Government and the Legislature. The principal of these demands is that as soon as possible "legislation provided for under Article 46 of the Constitution" should be introduced in Parliament. Article 46 recognizes the right of labor to participate in the management of industrial enterprises; it has not yet been implemented, however, by legislation. (Rome, 2/21—CIP.)

Italian Bishops Urge "Free" Labor Unions

AN URGENT appeal to all workers to become labor union members and a warning against those unions which are instruments of political parties based on the principle of class struggle are the highlights of a joint pastoral letter issued by the seven Bishops of the Province of Emilia, Central Italy, under the leadership of Archbishop Cesare Boccoleri of Modena. The pastoral letter stated that "the Church looks with pleasure and encouragement at the rise and growing strength of free and democratic organization which unite the workers, on the one hand, and the employers, on the other, not for a struggle aimed at their mutual destruction, but for the purpose of coordinating their respective interests for the benefit of the whole of society."

Summarizing the Catholic doctrine on the right of labor to organize, the pastoral letter declared: "The workers in every sphere of economic life have the right to organize unions for the safe and effective protection of their legitimate interests. This right, however, must be exercised within the limits of natural law and Divine law and in conformity with the basic principles of liberty, equity, and human dignity. In pooling their strength, the workers should have in mind above all the need to create a link of human solidarity for the affirmation and realization of their own welfare, in harmony with the common good, rather than a blind and egoistic instrument for fighting an unjust and ruinous class war. . . ."

The Bishops urged employers to "regard the labor unions, led by, and consisting of, honest and willing workers, not as hostile coalitions of enemies but as legitimate organizations for the protection of the rights of labor, and even as a means to obtain labor's active cooperation in productive efforts for the welfare of all."

The Bishops warned against the misuse of labor unions for political and revolutionary purposes: "Labor unions must not be allowed to degenerate and become instruments of violence and subversion, but should limit themselves to the defense of the genuine and permanent interests of the working class. They should always keep in mind the ends for which they have been organized, namely the realization of justice by constructive means, and should be aware of the needs of our country as a whole. . . . Sabotage endangering industrial and agricultural recovery must be opposed effectively and energetically."

Without mentioning the Communist-dominated Italian Labor Federation (CGIL) or the anti-Communist Free Italian Labor Federation (LCGIL) by name, the Bishops of Emilia appealed to the Catholic workers to join the latter: "All workers should consider it a duty to join free and independent labor unions in which they have an opportunity to take an active part in the defense of their interests and in the promotion of the common good by their vote and their activities. The more a labor union is free from the influence of political parties, the better it can safeguard the interests of the workers. . . ." (Rome 2/23, CIP.)

Italians Are "Frontier Catholics"

SPEAKING at the close of a Religious Week for the Diocese of Rome, sponsored by the Men's Association of Catholic Action, Professor Luigi Gedda, Chairman of the Men's Association as well as of Italy's famous Civic Committees, declared that Catholic men in Italy must become conscious of the fact that they are "frontier Catholics." He denounced those among them who wish Catholic organizations to "return to the sacristy" where they were held during the twenty years of the Fascist régime. "Yes," he exclaimed, "as Catholic men we wish to stand in thesacristy, ready to enter the church to take part in its liturgical functions. But in the sacristy, we wish the doors to be wide open for us to go wherever it is necessary."

Professor Gedda then mentioned the work of the Civic Committees which, without entering partisan politics, played a decisive rôle in last year's elections by impressing upon Italians the duty to vote and the need of defeating atheistic Communism. To those who claim that the Civic Committees are no longer needed, he replied that to dissolve them would be "not only ingratitude but sheer stupidity." The Italian Catholics, he emphasized, must be aware that "they are frontier Catholics. They must not allow the cement which unites them to be destroyed because this would open the dikes to the floods of disorder which these dikes have been holding back." (Rome, 2/7—CIP.)

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A Thomist Answers Sartre

KURT F. REINHARDT

THIS SLIM volume (*Existence and the Existent. The Christian Answer. Jacques Maritain. Transl. by Lewis Galantière and Gerald B. Phelan. Pantheon.* $3.00) is a translation of M. Maritain's *Court Traité de L'Existence et de L'Existant.* We are not sure whether the author has endorsed the sub-title (*The Christian Answer*) which has been added to the English edition. It might be more accurate to speak of the answer of an integral Thomist to contemporary atheistic existentialism, an answer which within this frame of reference is both profound and exhaustive. The translation is commendable throughout, preserving much of the flavor and all of the logical precision of the original in the much less pliable linguistic pattern of the English tongue.

In his introductory remarks M. Maritain distinguishes between Thomist or "authentic" and "apocryphal" existentialism. Both affirm the primacy of existence, but whereas the former preserves essences and manifests the victory of the intellect and of intelligibility, the latter destroys or denies essences and manifests the defeat of intellect and intelligibility. Atheistic existentialism is anti-intellectual and self-destroying, and its summons to the absolute freedom of self-creating choices is an impossible and absurd demand.

The chapter dealing with *being* presents a concise summary of the basic tenets of Thomist metaphysics and stresses the necessity of the "intuition of being" for any true and certain knowledge. The original error of all modern existentialist philosophy Maritain finds in the presupposition that "existence alone is the nourishing soil of philosophy. They treat of existence without treating of being." For the Thomist, on the other hand, essence and existence in their togetherness make up the one concept of *being* which "analogically permeates all beings" as "their very act of existing." Metaphysics, to be sure, uses the *concept* of existence, but it does so only to arrive at the primary source of all intelligibility, i.e., existence itself. Being is that which exists or is able to exercise existence, and at the summit of all being the intelligibility of essence fuses with the super-intelligibility of existence in the unity of HIM WHO IS. Thus the entire metaphysics of St. Thomas is "centered not upon essences but upon existence."

The chapter on *action,* starting from the thesis that Thomism is an existential intellectualism, blames contemporary existentialism for "repudiating speculation in favor of action and confusing knowledge with power." Maritain discovers certain contacts between Thomist and contemporary existentialism in "an authentic feeling for liberty and its essential transcendence," but he finds this true intuition vitiated by the contemporary existentialist's rejection of essence, the *forma rationis,* and of all object, causality, and finality. The existential ethics of Thomism relates to *love* as the perfection of human life, a perfection which consists in the "union of person with person to the point of transfiguration which, as St. John of the Cross says, makes a man a god by participation . . . in a single spiritual super-existence of love." The atheistic existentialists, on the other hand, reject the ethical universal "with the pleasure of barbarians," and they invalidate the principle of liberty by uprooting it from reason.

For Thomism *the existent* (chapter three) is the subject or *suppositum,* exercising the act of existing. On the human level, the *suppositum* becomes the self-determining *persona,* endowed with a spiritual soul, with the liberty of autonomy, and with all the inwardness of subjectivity. It is subjectivity, according to Maritain, which separates the world of philosophy from the world of religion. Whereas philosophy involves a relationship of intelligence to object, "religion enters into the relation of subject to subject." However, a seemingly irreducible antinomy exists between the perspectives of subjectivity and objectivity: in the subjective perspective "I am riveted to the absolute of selfishness and pride." In the objective perspective I become "false to my uniqueness and resign my destiny." This antinomy can be resolved only from above: "If God exists, then not I, but He is the center," the transcendent subjectivity to which all subjectivities are referred. In the love of the divine subject the human subject finds the absolute *raison d'être* for his self-love and for the love of his fellow-men. The man who is not known to God (and who knows not God) experiences that utter solitude and despair which make him desire total annihilation. But the man who sees himself in God experiences a superabundant actuality which epitomizes and redeems all the acts, past and present, of his subjectivity. In the intellectual possession of the *Ipsum esse subsistens* he knows himself and all other creatures "in a sovereignly existential manner . . . as subjects in the unveiled depth of their being." St. Augustine's *homo abyssus est* bears thus no resemblance whatever to the "absurd abyss of (Sartre's) pure and formless liberty," but points toward the abysmal depth of the essential structure of the human person.

In chapter four Maritain discusses *The Free Existent and the Free Eternal Purposes.* While in exercising its liberty in the line of *good* the created existent stands always in need of the prime causality of God, the created existent is truly alone in the line of *evil* or "nihilation": "'Without Me, you can do nothing'" implies that "'Without Me, you can make that thing which is nothing'" (*vous pouvez faire le rien*).

*

In the concluding section of his book M. Maritain makes some fine and pertinent observations on the passage from St. Thomas's and Kierkegaard's "existentialism of faith to the atheistic existentialisms." The French philosopher argues convincingly that Kierkegaard's "central intuition of the absolutely singular value and the primacy of the act of existing was in the last analysis the same as that which lies at the heart of Thomism." But he further and with equally good reasons avers that atheistic existentialism "has rejected everything that gave life to the "first existential generation." Atheistic existentialism posits and reveals "the absurdity of an existence uprooted from God." And Maritain antithetically arrays the infernal anthropological prospects and projects of the atheistic existentialist against the Christian's anticipations of eternal life. Sartre and his school, in other words, see the condition of man-in-the-world in the perspective of hell. This "inverted theology" in its antitheological frenzy is fanatically determined to bar "all the avenues

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of being," because "they are too liable to lead in the direction of the transcendent Being." This is why the central irrational dogma of the atheistic existentialist is Nietzsche's "God is dead." But the *anguish* of such a God-less philosophical existence is ruled out by Maritain as a philosophic category. He opposes to it *the anguish of the Cross*: "Anguish is the lot of subjectivity. It is in the philosopher, not in his philosophy. . . . It does not, or must not, enter into the intelligible texture of philosophy."

M. Maritain's *reductio ad absurdum* of atheist existentialism puts M. Sartre and his disciples in a tight spot, coming shortly after the broadside aimed at the same school of thought by the astute Hungarian Marxist, Georg Lukacz, and anticipating the speedy inclusion of M. Sartre's work in the index of forbidden books. Ali this may not greatly disturb the apostle of atheist existentialism as long as his proclamation of the absurdity of existence and his blasphemous calumniations of God and man continue to yield substantial royalties. But the reading of M. Maritain's pages of Christian wisdom will put those on guard who may still feel inclined to lend an ear to the lure of *"les anticipations de l'enfer."*

However, impregnable as the armor of this Thomist may be in matters of principle, his *argumenta ad hominem* in the cases of both Marcel and Heidegger are by no means either conclusive or exhaustive. To accuse Heidegger of atheism seems to have become fashionable ever since the publication of A. de Waehlens' comprehensive but lamentably lop-sided critique. Heidegger's own recent pronouncements as well as the penetrating analyses of Johannes Lotz, S.J. (cf. especially *Das christliche Menschenbild im Rigen der Zeit*, Heidelberg, 1947) may serve to point the way to a more equitable evaluation of non-Thomist existentialism in general and of Heidegger in particular.

Books

19 Stories. Graham Greene. Viking. $2.75.

THE VARIETY of mood in these stories of Graham Greene, the first of which was written in 1929 (Greene was born in 1905) and the last in 1948, will surprise readers acquainted only with Greene's best-known works, *The Heart of the Matter, The Labyrinthine Ways, Brighton Rock*. A list of American magazines in which some of the stories appeared gives a good hint of this variety: *The New Yorker, Harper's Magazine, Esquire, Tomorrow, Town and Country, The Commonweal* (*Cosmopolitan* has also printed him but, perhaps for copyright reasons, the story is not included in the American edition of *"19 Stories"*).

The *Esquire* story, "When Greek Meets Greek," is a genial account of how two wily old frauds outsmart themselves in the attempt to outsmart one another. The *New Yorker* story, "Men at Work," is a burlesque, somewhat reminiscent of early Evelyn Waugh, of wartime operations in the British Ministry of Propaganda. There are other humorous stories, in one of which, "Alas Poor Maling," the humor is on the level of slapstick. The *Harper's* story, "Proof Positive," and also "The Second Death" and to a degree "The End of the Party," involve the miraculous. One of the stories, "A Day Saved," is in the Kafka tradition. The remainder, more typical, deal with various degrees of moral weakness and corruption. The style varies from the succinct, packed manner of Greene's best novels to anecdotal (sometimes, with disconcerting effect, within the same story).

In a note prefacing the collection, Greene acknowledges: "I am only too conscious of the defects of these stories. . . . The short story is an exacting form which I have never properly practiced: I present these tales merely as the by-products of a novelist's career." His modesty is justified by stories which exhibit him as not quite sure of himself, whereas in his novels he is always in complete mastery. Yet some of his stories are hauntingly perfect. "The End of the Party," for example, a tale of identical twins whose shattering climax is followed by a climax even more shattering—a device which Greene used with like effect in *Brighton Rock* and several other of these stories: a double-twist one might say, where "twist" must be given a double meaning, the second being the twist of the knife in the wound. This, yes, is a device, but no more so than false rhymes in a poem, asymmetry in a painting. The validity of an artistic device depends upon its success and purpose. O'Henry's twist endings succeed but are usually as shallow as a practical joke; in the best of Greene, the twist provides a sudden illumination of the symbolic meaning of the whole story or novel; or else sharply intensifies the meaning, anchoring it in one's mind.

Graham Greene cannot, however, entirely be absolved of using his devices for inferior purposes. For example, his "entertainments" (thrillers) take on a special intensity from several causes, of which the significant one in this connection is his use of language and especially his syntax which causes every sentence to seem packed with meaning even when it may not be so. Several critics have complained of the monotony of his style, but this very monotony, like his monotony of atmosphere, has a cumulative force of its own and also a symbolic force: it expresses the spiritual poverty, the fear, the seediness, the obscure guilt, the disorientation of his characters better than any words of theirs could do, especially since inarticulateness or else a conscious or endemic inability to see and speak truthfully usually accompanies these qualities. Sometimes, though, the stylistic elements become virtuosity: the compression, the vivid original metaphors, the photogenic intensification of reality, too far outrun the meaning: manner becomes mannerism.

The most memorable stories in the collection have children as protagonists. This is today a hackneyed theme, but Greene gives it a deeper meaning (meanings, I should say) than the usual death-of-innocence, escapism, or routine allegory. I have already cited "The End of the Party," primarily a study of fear vs. convention with overtones of adult incomprehension, the mystic bond between twins (a theme Greene treats in another of these stories and at book length in "England Made Me": so many of these stories appear minor rehearsals for his novels), and as a final fillip, a guess about the nature of immortality. "The Innocent," until its ending, is a fairly routine although unusually vivid and compressed contrast of the innocence of childhood to the heedless corruption of adulthood; the final paragraphs qualify (and yet illuminate) innocence in a manner typically Greene.

"The Basement Room," soon to appear on the screen as "The Fallen Idol," comprises without sacrifice of central effect a remarkable variety of important and sug-

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gestive themes. On the surface it is the story of a childhood trauma which causes a boy to betray the one person he loves and to retreat forever from the terrible responsibility of involvement with other lives. The deeper meaning is suggested in Greene's story which appeared several weeks ago in this magazine. The agnostic narrator states: "Intellectually I am revolted at the whole notion of a God Who can so abandon His creatures to the enormities of Free Will." The title of the story is "The Hint of an Explanation." Does not this phrase perhaps offer the hint of an explanation of Greene's own obsession? Greene himself tells us (in *Another Mexico*) that he arrived at the belief in Heaven through the belief in Hell. He too, it might seem, is intellectually and also (perhaps most of all) humanly revolted by the enormities of free will. But he cannot wish free will out of existence. Terrestrial evil, his works seem to teach us (more and more explicitly) springs chiefly not from the conscious willing of evil, but from the failure to accept the basic, frightful responsibility of knowing good and evil—far more devastating than original sin because it *caused* original sin, together with all the sin which has occurred since.

DAVID BURNHAM.

Burke's Politics. Edited by Ross J. S. Hoffman and Paul Levack. Knopf. $4.75.

ARE YOU becoming a bit nauseated by much of the claptrap which passes today for statesmanship? Do you wish to read statements which you will deeply respect, even though they are made by a politician? If you can answer affirmatively either or both of these queries, you can profitably develop greater familiarity with the Right Honorable Edmund Burke, 1729-1797. Professors Hoffman and Levack of Fordham University have made selections from Burke's writings and speeches on reform, revolution and war and have attempted "to show the operations of Burke's mind, at its best, on all the great political questions of his age."

An impressive book of 536 pages, plus a detailed index is the result. Lengthy excerpts from ten different issues, together with the helpful comments and annotations of the editors, constitute the material of the book. Possibly most readers will be especially interested in the chapters dealing respectively with the oppression of Catholics, the French Revolution, and Ireland and Catholic political emancipation. These chapters and others fairly bristle with statements which you will like to see in print, and which you hope you will eventually find as the basis of practice.

During the period from 1766 to 1794 Burke sat in the House of Commons and thereby established the reputation of possessing the most powerful political mind that the House of Commons had ever known. During those years he repeatedly stressed his belief in the natural law; he indicated his preference for an aristocracy based not on wealth but on virtue; he favored the British system of representative government as opposed to the French type of Jacobin democracy, which he considered an "ignoble oligarchy." He urged Parliament not to be influenced by the passions of the people; he preached continually the importance of practical considerations in the solution of national problems.

Although an Anglican he repeatedly demanded fair treatment for Catholics in England and in Ireland, even though such a stand hurt him politically. He argued

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pointedly that Parliament was not free to pass any type of legislation it wished, even though the majority vote might be impressive. He was given to making such statements as "Partiality and law are contradictory terms": "Reason is never inconvenient but when it comes to be applied"; and "Everyone is satisfied that a conservation and secure enjoyment of our natural rights is the great and ultimate purpose of civil society." A final statement must be quoted, even though it is being rather generally disregarded today: "Religion, to have any force on men's understandings, indeed to exist at all, must be supposed paramount to laws, and independent for its substance upon any human institution, else it would be the absurdest thing in the world, an acknowledged cheat." In order to convince yourself how great even a politician can be, better read this book. You will be encouraged.

PAUL KINIERY.

Stalin & Co. Walter Duranty. Sloane. $3.

THIS BOOK offers a collective portrait of the men who rule Russia today. It is the story of the Politburo, which consists of a dozen or so members who, Mr. Duranty assures us, are not as black as they are painted. That's what Heine jestingly said of the devil. Thanks are due the author for a sort of whitewashing job, not quite intentional to be sure, for underneath it all there's a warning not to take the hydro-headed monster lightly. (Thanks, incidentally, are due the Bolsheviks for the serpent image which they have consistently applied to "capitalism," "imperialism," etc.). Here are a dozen heads that think as one, a dozen hearts hardened to a single resolution, a dozen faces which (if you will look at the portraits reproduced in this book) have a startling resemblance to one another. Cold fanatics let us call them, by their looks; not mere gangsters, as Mr. Duranty fears the public might think them; cold fanatics, then, by all means—that is, men who do nothing spontaneously, nothing in hot blood, but men who plan coolly and deliberately—and what they plan, unless men are intolerably stupid, all the world must know by now. No, judging by Mr. Duranty's book, gangsters they surely are not.

Mr. Duranty tells us that when he first met Stalin, the innocent question as to whether, like Napoleon or Cromwell, he believed in luck, brought an unexpected result. Stalin's brown eyes, described by former Ambassador Davies as "kind and gentle," were "hard as chilled steel." What did Mr. Duranty take him for, anyhow? ". . . an old Georgian granny to believe in gods and devils? I'm a Bolshevik and believe in none of that nonsense. . . . I believe in one thing only, the power of the human will."

And now we have it, the truth, which provides its own warning. Looking upon the dozen faces reproduced in the book, we see, cannot help seeing, a dozen Stalins, hard-faced, cold-eyed determined men, without belief other than in their wills, resolved upon one thing: to destroy a world and a culture not to their liking. And that is why we should feel grateful to Mr. Duranty for making all this only too clear, and even more for specifically revealing to us the sort of men we have to deal with.

In the event of Stalin's death, Mr. Duranty does not think there would be any change for better or worse. As he points out, all these other men referred to as

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"& Co." are repetitions of Stalin himself, all his own appointees in fact, whose cardinal characteristic summed up in one phrase is "Unity and loyalty to Stalin." So says Mr. Duranty, who also affirms that "to attack the Politburo as a group of heartless men who have clamped an iron tyranny upon two hundred million slaves . . . seems hardly to conform with the facts. 'Slaves' cannot be driven to such heights of courage and endurance as the Russian people showed throughout four years of war. . . ." Can't they, indeed? Mr. Duranty is either ignorant or forgetful of history. Does he not know that it was precisely the serfs, the real serfs of Alexander I's day, who, on their own, organized guerilla bands and contributed materially to Napoleon's debacle in 1812? Thanks to him, all the same, for this group of portraits. It comforts us to know that these enemies of society have cold hearts. Having too cold hearts is as bad as being muscle-bound. They are strong in appearance, but lack elasticity. Only warm human hearts have that. JOHN COURNOS.

And the Third Day. Sir Herbert Grierson. A Record of Hope and Fulfilment. Pictures chosen by John Rottenstein. Macmillan. $3.50.

THIS is an "anthology" of an original kind, assembling all the great records of human belief in an hereafter from the dawn of man's history to our own day, psalms, Scripture readings, poems, philosophical bits of Plato, historical records and sermons by great men like John Donne and Cardinal Newman. The illustrations are, with a few exceptions, taken from the great masters and William Blake. The introduction by Sir Herbert is Protestant in its background, but of a deep and vivid faith, accepting the Resurrection of Our Lord as an historical fact and the true and only conclusive argument for our faith in the reality of an hereafter.

It is this emphasis which makes this beautiful and lovable book so important to me personally, as it brings out one of the great *desiderata* of our liturgical movement: "With the truth of the (Easter) story Christian doctrine stands or falls. Easter is the great day of the Christian year. Christmas may have more homely and tender associations, but Easter is the birthday of Christian hope . . . Christianity is no code of new morals. Christ taught little that had not been envisaged, adumbrated, by earlier teachers . . . Juvenal . . . Job . . . No section of the Christian Church (sic!) has realized that more vividly than the Orthodox Church . . . in Russia." The Easter hope and victory is so widely lost in many people to whom the externals of the Yule feast mean so much—Catholics as well as others. This book is one of the most eloquent documentaries of the root-faith of Christians, badly needed in our hopeless days and equally badly needed in our disoriented and rudderless devotional life.

H. A. REINHOLD.

Throne of the World. Louis de Wohl. Lippincott. $3.00.

"THRONE OF THE WORLD" is a rehash of the decline (not quite the total fall) of the Roman Empire—from the years 425 to 452—told in the author's own terms of anachronism, adolescent dialogue, and two-dimensional figures. In his foreword, de Wohl states that his is an historical novel, and authenticates several of his scenes. As the "story" progresses—it is episodic rather than continuous—evidence of his research mounts up. It could not be more obvious if he had ap-

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pended labels to each page, advocating that the reader take note of all the interesting little facts he had smoked out. Never is a custom permitted to show itself casually—it must burst into evidence, and then be explained. Via dialogue, lessons in history and discourses in theology are offered for the further edification of the reader.

The props are standard: an affair between a barbarian prince of the Huns (later to be called Attila) and the Imperial Princess Honoria (family black sheep)—a clandestine arrangement carried out in a fashion which would do credit to a Douglas Fairbanks movie—leads, through devious routes, to the Hun invasion of Italy. Of course, there is the weak, effeminate Emperor, controlled by a strong Empress-Mother; there are the customary scheming underlings; pictures of barbaric cruelty and Roman excesses; one saintly man—Pope Leo I, who comes off rather badly; and, of course, a meek and innocent (naive) virgin who goes into trances when she prays.

There is a temptation to believe that the author wrote with a tongue-in-cheek attitude, but it is all too obvious that he was serious. It is a pity. A little humor, a touch of irony, and *Throne of the World* could have been a delightful parody on the current fad for dull novels about an exciting era.

ELIZABETH ANN COOPER.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Evelyn WAUGH is making a lecture tour in America now. His most recent book is "Scott-King's Modern Europe."

Max FISCHER, a widely traveled journalist, is now in New York. He is a lecturer on German literature and in the German language has published books on Kleist, Strindberg, the philosophy of Dante, and some poetry.

W. H. AUDEN, the poet, has just completed the libretto for Stravinsky's new opera

Rev. Damasus WINZEN, O.S.B., monk of Maria Laach Abbey, is now in Connecticut serving as Chaplain to the Regina Laudis Monastery.

Kurt F. REINHARDT is a professor of humanities at Stanford University.

David BURNHAM is a novelist and critic and former theatre reviewer for THE COMMONWEAL.

Paul KINIERY is a Dean of the Graduate School at Loyola University, Chicago.

John COURNOS is a critic and editor and compiler of the O. Henry and O'Brien short story anthologies.

Rev. H. A. REINHOLD is pastor of St. Joseph Church in Sunnyside, Washington, and a writer on the liturgy.

Elizabeth Ann COOPER is a graduate student at Fordham University.

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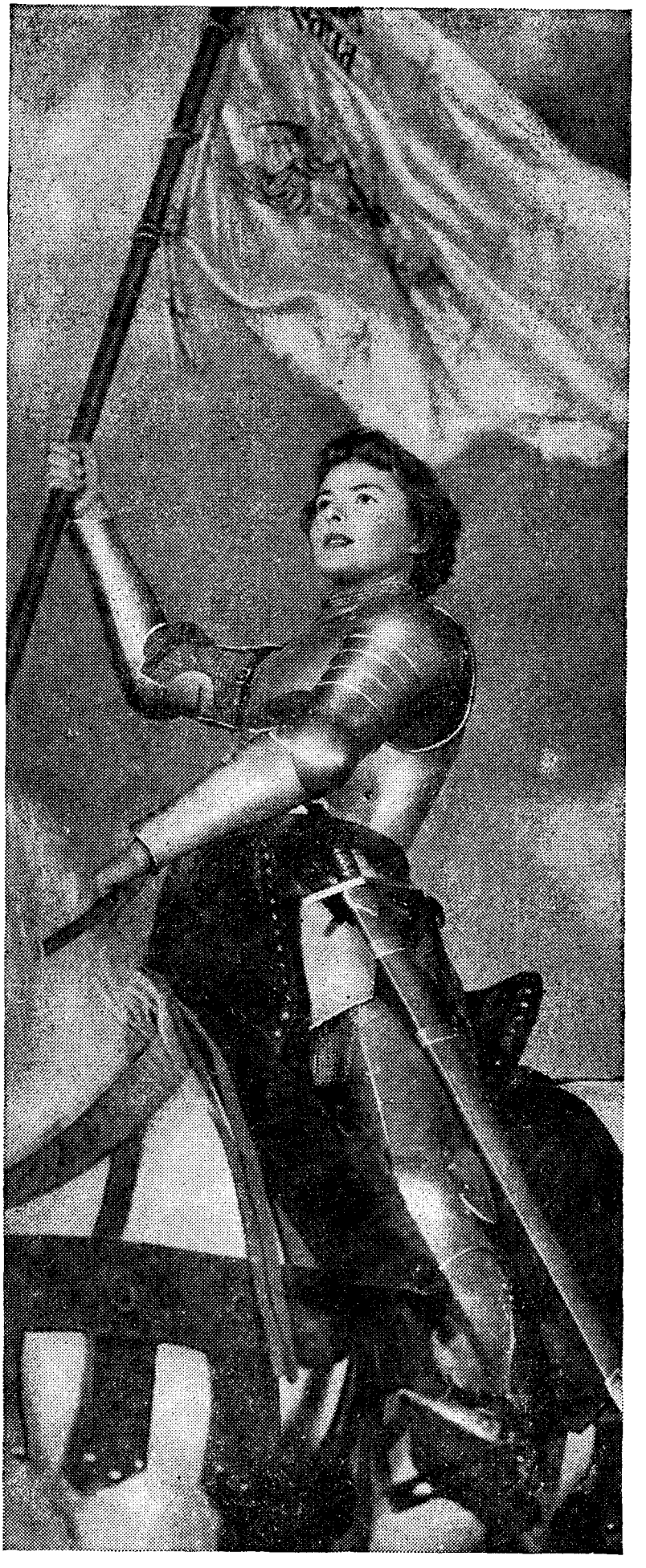

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